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7th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 24 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

Address by Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

The President: The Assembly will hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinatinal State of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): Mother Earth and humanity are suffering, stricken by the environmental, climate, financial and food crises generated by an inhumane, predatory capitalism that turns human life and Mother Earth into merchandise. Today we have an historic opportunity to build a new, different world, and we must do so without delay. The post-2015 agenda must express that mandate that Mother Earth and humanity demand of us.

We welcome the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals that incorporates the proposals of Bolivia and the peoples of the world to respect Mother Earth and the concept of harmony with nature. That is not a matter of a simple political statement. It is a commitment shared with the entire world to change our visions of development to a more comprehensive, holistic vision. What we propose to the world is living well, in harmony with Mother Earth, and the construction of a culture of life, complementarity, solidarity and peace.

Respect for Mother Earth has been lost. Today she is being marketed and manipulated, causing grave danger to life. Now as at no other time, the premise that man believes himself to be the lord and master of nature is more true than ever. Humankind, encouraged by capitalism, has turned everything into a market, including genetic manipulation and the destruction of human beings.

Human and natural life and their happiness should be the reason why any vision, tool or focus for development exists. No vision of development makes sense if it does not respect or strengthen life. Economic growth does not in itself lead to the realization of social rights and good living. The horizon of equality calls for the distribution of wealth and the economic and political empowerment of the poor, the excluded and the marginalized. It calls for strengthening communities and building societies with solidarity, not exclusive societies based on the accumulation of wealth and governed by money, covetousness and the avarice of the market.

Together with the Group of 77 and China, I must state the fundamental importance of recovering the sovereignty of our countries and peoples over our natural resources. It is only by recovering control of our natural resources that we will be able to garner greater benefits

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for our peoples, in particular to eliminate poverty and to invest in economic diversification, industrialization and social programmes.

Each country has the right to decide on its priorities and strategies for development, but it is important that those strategies strengthen the environmental functions and the ecosystems of Mother Earth in the framework of complementarity and mutual support between productive systems, communities and nature. It is vital to strike a balance between the rights of Mother Earth, the right to development, the rights of indigenous peoples and social, economic and cultural rights, as well as the right of the poor to emerge from poverty. Complementarity and mutual support, not commercial incentives, are instruments to preserve Mother Earth. On this point we differ from the followers of the so-called green economy.

An important issue to be promoted in the framework of the post-2015 agenda is the human right to water and the right of Mother Earth to enjoy water for regenerating and reproducing life. Three billion people today live in areas or regions where the demand for water exceeds its availability, and that reality will worsen as years pass. By 2030 the demand for water will have increased by 30 per cent. In 2050, four billion people will suffer from critical scarcity of water in the context of climate change.

In Bolivia, in accordance with human right to water and with our Constitution, and thanks to the national programme known as My Water, we have already reached the Millennium Goals. We did so three years ahead of schedule. Declaring the human right to water means it cannot be privatized. Water is life, and it cannot be an object of profit or commercialization. Likewise, to resolve serious social inequalities, basic services such as water, electricity, telecommunications and basic sanitation, as well as education and health, must be a human right.

We have a pending agenda to eradicate poverty and hunger, but for that we must also fight the pitiless, inhumane forces of capital and the market, the omnipresent power of banks and usurers who profit from consumerism and hunger. The so-called vulture funds are an expression of that. They are agents of financial rapine who live off speculation, stealing from developing countries with impunity, taking the bread from the poor, extorting and defrauding with the help of the legal systems of capitalism. They caused the financial crisis and profited from it.

We must profoundly change the exclusionary structures of financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That should be part of the transformation of the world financial architecture. Those organizations cannot be governed only by developed countries, which, through clever financial strategies, blackmail and oppress developing countries, especially the poorest. That is what we call eradicating financial colonialism.

In the world there still exists an offensive, abusive reality — the 1.3 billion poor people and more than 800 million who are chronically malnourished — as well as the gaps between the rich and the poor. That is due to an unequal distribution of income, but also to an unequal and discriminatory access to wealth, to the means and factors to live well and to enjoy basic services. The increase in the number of hungry people in the world is due, without doubt, to the financial crisis. If not for that, there would now be 413 million fewer hungry people in the world. But the eradication of hunger and poverty is unthinkable without changing the international financial architecture.

The violence of war feeds the darkest interests, such as the geopolitical control of the great Powers and corporations that promote conflicts in order to ensure their imperial or neocolonial interests. Today, it is the economic interests of capital that promote neocolonial wars. With the expense required for war campaigns, humankind could overcome many of its problems, including the Ebola virus, tuberculosis, AIDS or dengue.

We have again witnessed the cruelty and barbarity of the genocidal actions of the Government of Israel against the Palestinian civilian population. We have therefore denounced Israel for violating international humanitarian law and universal human rights. We demand an investigation of the crimes committed by Israel in the Gaza Strip. The Plurinational State of Bolivia, like other Latin American countries, agrees on the profound need to reiterate the legitimacy of United Nations resolutions demanding the end of the occupation of the Palestinian territories and the construction of an independent State within the borders existing prior to 4 June 1967. That is why we again reiterate the need to recognize Palestine as a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

As Chair of the Group of 77 and China, I cannot fail to mention the important commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Group of 77,

held on 14 and 15 June in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. The Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China adopted a declaration entitled "For a new world order for living well" (see A/68/948), which confirms the principles of unity, complementarity and solidarity and the building of a new world order that establishes a more just and democratic system for the benefit of our peoples.

We commend the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Peoples' Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) on completing 10 years of tireless work towards the integration of peoples. That work goes beyond commercial profit and focuses on promoting the values of cooperation, solidarity and complementarity. In its 10 years, ALBA-TCP has become a major player in Latin America and the world.

Since March 2011, 150,000 people have died in Syria and 3 million people have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries. Bolivia agrees that the future and destiny of Syria must be determined by the Syrian people themselves in the full exercise of democracy, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia condemns and rejects the interference by the United States of America in Iraq that triggered the current crisis in the country. The war unleashed in 2003 against Iraq destabilized the entire region. It was said that Iraq possessed large quantities of weapons of mass destruction. That argument remains one of the biggest lies ever told in the history of imperialism. On the basis of that lie, peaceful coexistence among social, ethnic and religious groups has been destroyed. The situation has given rise to a terrorist group called the Islamic State that is imposing a new war that threatens the entire region. Bolivia rejects the extreme violence with which that terrorist group has acted against civil society and wholeheartedly affirms that nothing justifies fratricidal violence.

The invasion of Iraq, together with other historical events, has taught us a lesson that wherever the United States of America intervenes, it leaves destruction, hatred, misery and death in its wake, but it also leaves wealth in the hands of those who profit from the wars: the transnational corporations of the arms industry and the oil industry. We must make use of the culture of peace to eradicate extremist fanaticism, but also the imperial warmongering promoted by the United States, which, faced with war, threatens more war. The United Nations was created to build and promote peace, not to justify wars and invasions.

Using war against war is not the same as peace. That is a perverse formula — the formula for death and endless confrontation. We must resolve the structural causes of war: marginalization, poverty, lack of opportunities, cultural and political exclusion, social discrimination, inequality, usurpation and territorial dispossession, ruthless capitalism and dictatorship of the interests of transnational corporations. Every year here we hear Mr. Obama deliver a discourse on war, arrogance and threats against the peoples of the world. It is also a discourse of extremist fanaticism.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against Cuba is the main tool of United States policy in its eagerness to destroy the revolution and restore its hegemony over Cuban territory. The blockade against Cuba is the most unjust, severe and prolonged system of unilateral sanctions that has ever been applied against any country. The blockade qualifies an act of genocide. That colonial blockade must be ended immediately.

We want to affirm before this Assembly the historic right of the Bolivian people to their access to the sea — a right that was trampled by a brutal invasion promoted by colonial business interests. The colonial imposition, the absence of genuine participatory democracy and the interests of foreign companies were interposed between the Bolivian and Chilean peoples, fraternal peoples who were led to a war favouring the transnationals. Because my country firmly believes in and promotes peace and harmony in our relations with all of our neighbours, we turned to the International Court of Justice in search of dialogue to resolve, peacefully and in good faith, a prolonged dispute over our sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

Our demand does not seek to alter the international order of the limits and boundaries or to threaten international treaties, as the the Government of Chile would have people believe. On the contrary, Bolivia has invoked international law and its principles to resolve, methodically and in good faith, the issue of its sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean. An effective and peaceful solution regarding Bolivia's sovereign access to the sea would be in the interests of our peoples, the new generations, the region and the whole world. I therefore call on all countries of the United Nations system at this sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly to join us, not only Bolivia, but our neighbour Chile, in this challenge to peace, justice and rule of law.

We must eradicate violence and war and denounce the imperialist warmongering of the world Powers that

arrogantly believe they embody the ideals of freedom. The imperial Powers use their communication media to manipulate the wills and the emotions of the people. They lie and deceive with impunity. They divide and pit nations and communities against one another to promote wars, control strategic resources and put them at the service of their foreign capitals.

This is the century of peace, but peace with sovereignty, with freedom for peoples and not with a free market. This is the century of agreements on liberty, life and peace and not for agreements on free trade in life. There will be no harmony if the arrogance of empires and their renewed colonialism harass, oppress and kill human beings, cultures and the peoples of the world. The empire of finance, the empire of markets, the empire of the arms industry must all fall to give way to the wisdom of life and life in peace and harmony.

To summarize with the greatest respect and admiration for the Assembly, I would like to say that if we want to put an end to poverty, if we want to defend life and Mother Earth, our only path is to put an end to the capitalist system and imperious thinking for the well-being of humanity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Medina Sánchez (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate in the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations by representing the people and the Government of the Dominican Republic. I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his election as President at the current session. I wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the honour bestowed on our country by inviting us to participate in the Education First initiative. As I hope that he was able to note in his recent visit to our country, the priority that education is being given in the Dominican Republic is perhaps the best indicator of the new hopes springing up in our country. It is true that news of hope is especially valuable these days when it is not very abundant.

Generally speaking, the times we live in raise major challenges for the mission of the Organization — preserving peace, encouraging development, making education and health the entitlement of all inhabitants of the Earth. As we are all aware, about six years ago, a crisis that began in the financial sector of developed countries quickly spread to all productive sectors and has affected the entire planet. The consequences of the economic shock continue to be felt and were translated into tens of millions of unemployed, millions of evictions and deep cuts in social benefits in our countries.

The welfare State, the instrument which produced some of the greatest advances in development and security in history, was jeopardized. Today, we live the paradox of seeing how that ideal of sustainable growth and social justice becomes more fragile in the countries of origin, while it is being reborn in emerging countries. While developed countries adopt policies of austerity and structural adjustments, which are concepts sadly familiar to Latin Americans, we see how social programmes proliferate in different corners of the planet, lifting millions out of poverty and mitigating inequality.

In the Dominican Republic, we still have a long road ahead of us, but we are taking firm steps in the fight against poverty and inequality. We are a small country but we do not lack ambition. We have made the commitment to our people, our citizens, to put them at the centre of our public policy. And we have set ourselves the goal to become a developed and prosperous country, where equal opportunities will be, not an ideal, but an everyday reality.

To achieve this, we have established a major domestic compact, which will be our top priority as a nation: namely, education. That is why we have doubled the current budget for public education and allocated

to it 4 per cent of our gross domestic product. This will enable us to carry out the largest expansion of school infrastructure ever in our history and ensure that all girls and boys, without exception, will have access to quality public education. I am also proud to tell the Assembly that at the end of this year, thanks to the efforts of thousands of volunteers, we will be in a position to declare our country free of illiteracy.

In health, that second pillar essential to the welfare State, we are also making significant progress. We have eliminated the co-payment for all public hospitals. Every year, we add 450,000 participants to the subsidized health insurance system.

We are also giving priority to supporting small agricultural producers. We have been visiting rural communities every week for two years now, listening to people and seeking ways of helping them, such as by providing credits, training and infrastructure. The result of this, which is being monitored by the United Nations Development Programme, is a rebirth of the Dominican countryside, including improving its ability to feed the country and creating employment in rural communities. Thanks to that and other measures, over the past 18 months in the Dominican Republic overall poverty has been reduced by 6 per cent and poverty in rural areas by 9 per cent. In other words, in 18 months we have lifted more than half a million people out of poverty. We will continue to work tirelessly, implementing policies that put the economy at the service of the people and taking measures to combat poverty and inequality in a sustainable manner, and we will continue to create the basis of what one day will be a full welfare State in the Dominican Republic.

It is an honour for us to be one of the signatory nations of the founding Charter of the United Nations, which, as everyone knows, assigned to the Organization its purpose of saving future generations from the scourge of war. We should recognize that 2014 is presenting major challenges to that noble purpose. In different latitudes of the world, there have been violent conflicts between communities, peoples or States. The contexts of those conflicts are varied, but one thing remains constant — the extent to which past grievances shape our identities today, and how dangerous it is to allow oneself to be submerged by them. We watch in perplexity and indignation the virulence with which these violent conflicts are waged in different parts of the world.

The Middle East is once again the scene of the bloodiest sectarianism, which we condemn from this rostrum in all its manifestations. In the history of all nations or communities, without exception, there is a long history of disagreements, misunderstandings and quarrels that, at times, can be used to stir up the worst passions. They can be manipulated by individuals seeking to consolidate power or inflamed by extremist groups that feel that they have nothing to lose. There will always be someone who keeps old disputes alive. There will always be someone who does not mind sacrificing the true interests of the people at the time because of the wrongs of the past recorded in the history books.

However, there are plenty of examples to the contrary. Throughout the world, there are people and countries that have managed to leave their past behind in order to focus on building the future that they want for their children and new generations. Whether it is building bridges between countries once in conflict, as the European Union did, or among communities that decided to share the same nation, as in the case of South Africa. Hope can and must find its way.

I would also like, if I may, to bring a note of optimism from our Caribbean region. In the past year, we started a dialogue process with neighbouring Haiti that can rightly be regarded as historic. Our situation is of course unique but not to the degree that it cannot be echoed in other parts of the world. As members perhaps know, since the birth of our two Republics, there has been a long history of misunderstanding and disputes, which led to each of our countries having a distorted picture of the other.

It is true that in our past there were a couple of painful chapters, which are part of our identity. However, if we limit our identity to those few chapters, it will be impoverished. Our history is very rich. It has hundreds of chapters. In many of them, we can find the inspiration to guide us towards a better future and a more complete, richer and more human identity because that is clearly an excellent basis for understanding. In both countries, there are millions of people who want better development, education, health care, security and jobs and more opportunities. Those are concrete demands that require specific measures. The truth is that, by responding to them and reaching agreements in each of those areas, in a few months we were able to achieve the progress that we had not made in decades.

Little by little, we are moving forward. We are discovering that old wounds do not impede advancing on that path, but that they heal as we move forward. Our peoples demanded that we exercise the necessary

courage to take the first step. We will continue to take steps until we achieve our goal of two free, sovereign and independent nations that, on the basis of their sovereignty, cooperate for the benefit of their respective peoples.

I wish to take this opportunity from this rostrum at the General Assembly to make an appeal. As I have said, a new era in Dominican-Haitian relations has begun. In that new phase, we would like to enjoy the support of the international community. One of our main actions to strengthen Dominican sovereignty and to ensure the rights of people living in our territory is to provide them all the relevant documentation. As members know, many of those people are Haitian. In order to regularize their status in the territory of the Dominican Republic, they must first have identity papers from their country of origin, which many of them unfortunately lack. Haiti is making an effort to reach those Haitians and to provide them with documents that recognize them as its nationals. However, Haiti's technical and economic resources are limited. In the past, a number of international organizations and countries have expressed their concern about the fate of Haitian migrants. We share that concern for humanitarian reasons and because it affects us as the main host country.

I would therefore note that now is an excellent time to move from words to actions. With specific and relatively simple actions, the international community can have a major and lasting impact on the lives of those people. I appeal for help for Haiti. May the international community help Haiti to document its people in its territory and in ours, since documentation is the first essential step for the enjoyment of a wide-ranging body of rights. Let us not allow a few technical shortcomings to be an obstacle to such a hopeful and necessary process with as much potential as that new stage of cooperation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

There are times when our best aspirations seem fragile. There are times when cynical people point out, under I do not know what law of the economy or in history, that we are bound to repeat the mistakes of the past. They say that poverty cannot be overcome, that the gap of inequality will always grow and that past grievances will be reborn in each new generation. However, we know that none of that is true. We know where to look to find the path of hope. We have only to look at those who are closest, that is, our own people, their basic daily needs and the hopes that motivate them to continue the struggle. If we look carefully, we see that the economy is not a prison but can be a tool for improving the lives of people. We find that the people are free. They are free to know which parts of their past they wish to use as a guide to their future and which they wish to leave aside.

We will find a way to work together, as we have done with the neighbours with whom we share an island, or as we found yesterday, during the climate summit, with the other countries with which we share the planet. The citizens that we represent, increasingly better informed, demand that we live up to our responsibility and our declared commitment: to preserve peace, to promote development and to make education and health care the right of all inhabitants of the planet.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Dominican Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kenyatta: It is a great pleasure to address the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. As the current Chairman of the East African Community, I am particularly pleased to see The Honourable Sam Kutesa preside over the General Assembly. I assure you, Mr. President, of the full support of my Government during your presidency.

I would like to begin by lending my voice to all of those who have called for urgent and sustained attention

to the devastating Ebola crisis in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Beyond the tragedy of the thousands who have lost lives and loved ones and the many more living with that threat, livelihoods and businesses have collapsed and aspirations for shared prosperity continue to shrink day by day. Kenya stands in solidarity with the countries affected by this devastating virus.

Earlier this month the Kenyan people gave $1 million to the effort to bring the crisis under control, and we stand ready to do more. Last week, ministers of health from the East Africa region converged in Nairobi and agreed on measures to safeguard our populations and ensure that the virus does not spread in our region. The suspension of international flights into Monrovia and other affected capitals, including by Kenya Airways, followed a stark warning from the World Health Organization (WHO). Those measures, among others, have isolated the affected countries and further hurt the people and economies of the region.

With regard to Kenya, our intention was not to do harm, but the warning from the WHO left us, as a regional hub, with few options. We stand ready to resume Kenya Airways flights once appropriate measures are put in place. Kenya believes that nothing in the immediate future requires more attention and determined response from the international community than the effort to stop and contain that devastating virus. I therefore welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response, which I am sure will guide a collective global response.

The Ebola crisis underlines the imperative to build strong States that can withstand crisis and respond to emergencies. State weakness in many African countries comes from a history of development paradigms and practices that weakened the State. We must commit to building strong, resilient and accountable States that can effectively respond to shocks, adversities and emergencies in the future.

You, Sir, are presiding over a session of the General Assembly of historic significance to humankind. The sixty-ninth session will oversee the development and adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. This effort will build on the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which developed those goals. Kenya is indeed proud to have been at the forefront of driving the Open Working Group process.

The new world development agenda must address itself to the entire cross-section of social, economic and environmental challenges that face the world in the twenty-first century. Issues of sustained economic development, equality among nations, climate change, industrialization, biodiversity loss and environmental protection must now go hand in glove with the traditional challenges of poverty, disease, hunger and inequality within nations. The new agenda must therefore be universal and comprehensive and responsive to all nations equally in order to be transformative in its impact.

We in Kenya recognize, however, that a number of obstacles stand in the way of achieving the new development agenda. The most immediate of these are terrorism and violent extremism. In Kenya, we stand at a critical moment. As we deepen our democracy, we find our nation thrust onto the front line of a regional and global war against terror. We have become acutely aware that the interplay between democratization, on the one hand, and effective counter-terrorism, on the other, presents severe challenges to our security and our governance institutions. Increasingly, terrorist actors are exploiting the expanded democratic space, sometimes feeding into and even influencing local politics. Unless we can provide an effective buffer to fight back against that tendency, Kenya and indeed other countries will find it difficult to entrench democracy and the post-2015 development agenda.

Besides the immediate threat of terrorism, the state of economic and social well-being is also affected by the lack of sustainable peace and security in many of our countries. From the Central African Republic to Mali, Libya and even as far afield as the Middle East and Europe, we see new conflicts and crises that could derail or delay development. In Kenya, we are particularly concerned by the perennial fragility that has come to characterize the greater Horn of Africa.

In Somalia, Kenya continues to sacrifice lives and resources in an effort to bring peace to our neighbour. We do this trusting that the international community will stay the course in Somalia. This involves consolidating peace and investing in stable, responsive national institutions that guarantee public safety, promote democracy and civil liberties, as well as development and peace in the country and region.

As we meet here, South Sudan also remains in turmoil. Kenya and other countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have invested considerable effort in ending that tragedy and sparing the people of South Sudan further suffering.

Regrettably, however, progress has been slow. We cannot let that young nation and its people down. At this session of the Assembly, I make a special plea for South Sudan, for no nation has, over the years, suffered as much neglect from the international community.

Similarly, no country today remains as desperately in need of rapid and transformative economic and social development as South Sudan. We cannot allow a return to political chaos, economic collapse or social desperation. I implore the leaders of that young nation to demonstrate determined and enlightened leadership and to make peace without further delay. Such action will save the people of the nation enormous suffering and offer hope of a better future. I thank the Security Council for its continued cooperation with IGAD in the search for peace in South Sudan. It is this concert of action that will help to bring about lasting peace, which in turn will form the basis for a transformative post-2015 development agenda for South Sudan and all of its neighbours.

On the continent of Africa the development model of the past 50 years has run its course. That outmoded model was defined by negative trade relations, paternalistic global governance regimes and overreliance on official development assistance. Moreover, it was driven by external prescriptions for development that were heavy on political instruction, but light on economic and social transformation.

We now know better. We know that our social and economic transformation shall come first from within our nations, our region and our continent, and only secondly from the complement of external ideas and resources. Equally important, those external contributions must recognize the primacy of our aspirations and ideas. They must value and safeguard, rather than simply exploit and consume, our domestic resources and the product of our people's labour. For the post-2015 development agenda to be transformative, therefore, it must first embrace the primacy of developing countries whose people seek sustained development most. Anything less will be a recipe for failure.

We cannot speak of development or of transformation when millions of the world's people are mired in and are broken by unrelenting poverty, disease and hunger. The business of ridding the world of those plagues, touched upon but not fully embraced by the Millennium Development Goals, must be the first of the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda. Equally important, it must be fully financed and accelerated, if we are to lay the groundwork for a transformative agenda for the next generation. I cannot emphasize that point enough. The scourge and shame of debilitating poverty, preventable diseases and chronic hunger must be erased from our global civilization. In reaching the sustainable development goals we have set ourselves, within a time frame of 15 years, we must not fail.

This year, at the United Nations, Kenya is proud to have presided over the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities. Kenya also presided over the United Nations Forum on Forests and co-chaired the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Kenya is currently presiding over the UNICEF Board, as it seeks to provide global leadership for issues of concern to the world's children and their well-being.

Kenya is a member in good standing of the international community and it intends to continue to shoulder its global and regional responsibilities. Kenya is especially proud of the scores of Kenyans who work for the United Nations here in New York, but also further afield in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and in many United Nations organizations in various United Nations stations around the world, including Nairobi. I salute all those Kenyans — every single one of them — for their dedication and commitment. We in Kenya believe that no nation is too poor or too rich, too big or too small to play its rightful role in making the world a better place for all.

At the national level, Kenya grounds her transformative agenda on a strategic vision — our Vision 2030. Importantly, in 2010 we adopted a new democratic Constitution, which expanded and guaranteed a wider range of rights for our people and defined new institutions for the advancement of those rights. Drawing on that, we have re-engineered our system of governance, making it more democratic, inclusive, devolved and responsive. We have also significantly expanded participation in political and development decision-making.

In four short years, we have begun to witness the fruits of those foundational changes. Aware of the imperative to carry along all our people in development, my Government launched targeted interventions for the most vulnerable in society. Those include a number of financial initiatives and training programmes for women and youth. We have also prioritized the

advancement of children's rights and welfare through initiatives that reduce mortality and morbidity. Chief among them are universal immunization coverage, the promotion of breast-feeding for the first six months of a child's life, the provision of fortified foods and insecticide-treated mosquito nets, as well as free care for mothers and children in all government hospitals.

In that respect, I wish to commend the first Lady of Kenya, Ms. Margaret Kenyatta, for successfully launching the Beyond Zero Campaign that is tapping into private sector financing to bolster the management of chronic preventable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and to improve maternal and child health throughout the country.

Kenya is today on track to achieve universal primary education. Based on that, we have expanded our vision to include universal secondary education. We are seeking to build a more inclusive society, and strive to leave no one behind. It is for that reason that my Government has implemented a social protection cash transfer programme to orphans and vulnerable children, persons with severe disabilities and our elderly citizens. The programme targets 450,000 households throughout Kenya. Impact evaluations indicate that the programme has reduced poverty, improved family health and raised school enrolment.

As the Assembly is aware, Kenya is a leading tourist destination. We are also endowed with a number of rare species, some endangered, which we hold in trust for humankind. My Government attaches great value to conservation. We continue to raise awareness of the need to step up the fight against poaching and illicit wildlife trafficking. We have enacted laws to help fight the scourge, and continue to work with other countries and organizations to enhance the protection of our fauna and flora. Similarly, Kenya remains at the heart of international efforts to mitigate and adapt to challenges relating to climate change. We continue to work towards achieving 10-per cent forest cover; we are well above global targets for renewable energy use, and fully support all measures agreed upon at the recent United Nations Environmental Assembly in Nairobi.

Recognizing that our prosperity is linked to that of our neighbours, Kenya is engaged in a range of programmes and activities to hasten eastern African integration. We have eased the movement of goods and services across our borders. More importantly, our people can travel, work and settle across east Africa. We have also grown our trade volumes and are looking to closer integration across a range of other sectors.

Those are a few highlights of my Government's transformative agenda. We are committed to safeguarding and expanding those initiatives by creating an enabling and secure environment. In light of that, my Government continues to invest heavily to combat extremists and terrorists. The global effort needs to be reinforced because, as we know, the intent of terrorists is to destroy free, secure and democratic nations and people. As long as international terrorism exploits our open, multicultural and multi-religious society and gravely harms our social fabric, our progress towards achieving the goals of a transformative agenda will no doubt be slowed.

Kenya believes in a better, happier and more prosperous future for all. It is my hope that the confluence of forces that have come together to continually make our development efforts unnecessarily difficult will be persuaded with urgency, to reassess their motives and hopefully re-engage within the global community and with our country and region in a more positive, constructive and humane manner; recognizing that, in the end, no one people, nor one country, not even any one continent, can inhabit the world peaceably alone in isolation from the rest of the globe. We are in this world together to succeed together, to win together and to build a better future for all everywhere, together.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President

of the Republic of Costa Rica, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Solís Rivera (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We wish him the greatest success in carrying out his duties.

Whirlwinds of oppression and violence, anxiety, desperation and the systematic violation of human rights affect many corners of the world. We are witnessing an upsurge in violence and armed confrontations and an increase in atrocious crimes and extremism with an ever increasing number of displaced persons, humanitarian crises and deplorable acts that remain unpunished.

We are also concerned in particular about the universal dimension of the crisis caused by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). That reality requires the coordinated and forceful multilateral action of the international community in accordance with the relevant bodies of the Organization. We have seen the images and heard the screams of pain and distress rising out of Gaza, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Mali, Libya, the Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic. The cries can also be heard in Central America, where thousands of children and young people cross borders alone heading towards the United States of America, fleeing violence and a lack of opportunities in pursuit of dreams that can turn into nightmares. The Assembly can never put aside the future of those children because, in many ways, the girls and boys of Central America who travel alone are also our sons and daughters.

Costa Ricans are not indifferent to the terror of armed conflicts, less still to the suffering of the millions of victims of its most abject manifestations. As a nation, we have always stood with our sister nations in our efforts to bring an end to war and to establish peace. The conflicts that torment us often emerge from the fragile situations of States and their institutions: extreme poverty, corruption and impunity. In all of them, serious human rights violations have occurred. None of those conflicts broke out without prior warning. Ther were clear warning signs. In some cases, the threat was identified but no action was taken, as in Syria. In other cases, the danger was not acknowledged in time, as in South Sudan. However, in all such cases, the victims are those who are most vulnerable and most need our help but who cannot make their voice heard. They are the reason that we are here today.

Faced with the loss of human lives, we have reason to ask ourselves if we have kept the solemn promise that accompanied the founding of the United Nations 69 years ago. Do all Members of the Organization refrain from resorting to the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of other States? In some cases, that is so, in others not, but the failure to act is unacceptable. When States disregard that promise, the system of the United Nations is called to action. Otherwise, it becomes weak. It loses its essence. It loses its spirit.

The greatest challenge facing the international community, the United Nations and the Security Council — the challenge I wish to talk about today — is maintaining international peace and security as essential common goods. If we want peace, we must prepare for peace. Maintaining international peace and security begins with a culture of peace. As an unarmed democracy and home to the University for Peace, the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Costa Rica believes that the culture of peace and education for peace must be an absolute priority. We are convinced that peace, like war, is not the product of a human or an historic destiny but is borne of the very freedom of the human being.

Maintaining international peace and security is not restricted to dealing with conflicts. The Organization was founded on the ashes of two world wars precisely in order to prevent them. Prevention begins at the State level, with the strengthening of democracy and its institutions, good governance and a social welfare State founded of the rule of law as a basic prerequisite for the promotion of development and fair and inclusive societies. Prevention is also founded on a solid and functioning multilateral system. Costa Rica values and encourages the preventive diplomatic measures provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which include mediation, good offices and early warning.

Mr. Aslov, (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As part of the Group of Friends of Mediation, I would like to highlight Costa Rica's leadership in negotiating General Assembly resolution 68/303, which seeks to acknowledge the key role that regional and subregional organizations play in mediating and managing conflicts. To date, that is the first General Assembly resolution on mediation to recognize that

role. Its inclusion is therefore a true achievement of the General Assembly.

Maintaining international peace and security requires all States to resolve our disputes peacefully in line with the Charter of the United Nations and in strict accordance with international law and agreements. Costa Rica firmly believes in and implements all aspects of international law. We therefore underscore in particular the role of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Peace cannot take root where there is impunity. When war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity have been committed, those responsible must be investigated and put on trial, including by the International Criminal Court when the national jurisdiction proves insufficient.

Our country opposes the weakening of the Rome Statute and any proposed reform that could promote tolerance for impunity. Once again, we remind the Security Council of its authority and responsibility to refer to the International Criminal Court cases that occur in non-States parties. That is the only approach we recognize. Our only weapon is and will always be international law.

Maintaining international peace and security also necessitates strengthening the single global Organization charged with defending them. The Security Council must progress from a reaction mentality towards one of action, and reaffirm its moral and political commitment to all humankind. It must be vigilant, strategic and proactive. It must be democratic, efficient, transparent and inclusive. My country has objected to the use of the veto to obstruct measures aimed at preventing or resolving conflict. Costa Ricans are amazed by the way some permanent Council members have invoked the principal of sovereignty to block intervention by the Council at a moment when it should have acted to prevent rivers from turning red with the blood of innocent victims.

We reiterate our call on the permanent members to refrain from using the veto, especially in situations of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and mass human rights violations. We therefore welcome the French proposal for a code of conduct addressing the use of the veto. In that spirit, Costa Rica supports the Secretary-General's Rights Up Front Action Plan so as to place human rights at the centre of the prevention activities of the United Nations. Given our serious and unshakeable commitment to human rights, I respectfully ask the Assembly to back Costa Rica's re-election to the Human Rights Council in October.

Our poet Jorge Debravo said that we Costa Ricans

> "have the obligation to fight for a better future for man, for a wonderful future. It is not an option for us to remain silent. It is not an option for us to be observers or simple witnesses to the struggles of our nations. In a time like this, remaining neutral is to betray humanity's future".

Because silence is not an option for us, we condemn the indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israel by Hamas and its use of human shields, just as we condemn the use of disproportionate force in military operations carried out by the Israel Defense Forces. We demand respect for the ceasefire and the negotiation of a permanent solution based on two States living side by side in peace and harmony.

Because silence is not an option for us, we reject the transfer of conventional weapons to existing conflict zones. As one of the world leaders in the negotiations that led to the Arms Trade Treaty — an idea originally proposed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former-President Óscar Arias Sánchez — we urge States to reconsider their laws and policies regulating the transfer and availability of arms and munitions, with a view to preventing access by those who would use them in violating human rights and international humanitarian law. To trade in death is to become an accomplice to atrocities. In that context, it would be appropriate to ask the Assembly: What is the ethical — not legal or regulatory — difference between trafficking arms that kill young people in less-developed countries and trafficking in drugs that lead to the same result in the planet's richest countries?

Because silence is not an option for us, Costa Rica rejects the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas of Syria, Gaza and eastern Ukraine. Costa Rica urgently calls on Member States to develop stricter rules and commitments to prohibit and restrict their use, not only because they violate international humanitarian law, but also because taking action on that issue, here and now, is critical to reducing incentives to non-combatants to take up arms and join the extremists.

Because silence is not an option for us, we also condemn the use of cluster munitions in Syria, South Sudan and eastern Ukraine. As the host of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster

Munitions, which took place in San Jose from 2 to 5 September, my country will continue to reject the manufacture, use and trade of those weapons. We rejoice that our beloved Central America has become the first region of the world to be declared free of cluster munitions, and reiterate our commitment to continuing to promote the Convention's universalization.

Because silence is not an option for us, we reiterate our rejection of nuclear weapons. No State should develop or possess nuclear weapons. Maintaining and updating nuclear weapons requires immense economic and human resources that are necessary for responding to the key challenges of our time, such as achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the sustainable development goals. Costa Rica is ready to negotiate a new, legally binding instrument on nuclear disarmament and calls on States to honour their commitments in that regard.

There can be no peace without sustainable development. There can be no peace in the world so long as there is poverty. There can be no peace in the presence of extreme wealth disparity. There can be no peace while we destroy humankind's habitat. There can be no peace while large sectors of humankind lack guaranteed access to drinking water. There can be no peace so long as we fail to understand that all of humankind and Planet Earth's biodiversity can and must thrive and live together. There can be no peace while we fail to guarantee all human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social — and in particular the right to development.

Because we yearn for peace, we call on the nations of the world to join us in defining the post-2015 development agenda. In just one year's time, the General Assembly will be tasked with adopting the international framework for achieving sustainable development. The challenge we will face is colossal; we must therefore humbly acknowledge that, despite progress, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has been, at best, insufficient.

I am convinced that the new sustainable development agenda must be a tool primed for action, with precise objectives, clear targets and indicators that will allow us to measure and monitor its success. In addition, it must result from a broad international consensus, including open and transparent negotiation processes that involve not only the Member States, but also other international actors and civil society organizations whose experience will significantly enrich the final agreement.

We are facing the most serious threat in our history — the very survival of our species. Actions taken to confront it must not be timid. On the contrary, every public policy, national and international alike, must take climate change into account as a determining factor. Costa Rica celebrates the vision of the Secretary-General in convening the Climate Summit at the opening of this session. Now is the time to demonstrate our political commitment to achieving a legally binding instrument on climate change by 2015. In addition, we demand robust action on the part of those countries that contribute most to global warming. Their production and consumption methods must be completely revised as their impact on the planet's most impoverished people — the ones most affected by climate change — is undeniable. If humankind is to survive, we must reverse the current trend.

Three years ago, 33 countries came together to establish the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Its agenda is underpinned by full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Its objective is to build diverse, equitable, fair and egalitarian societies, where eradicating poverty and hunger are given priority status. I salute the nations, members of this community.

In an international context of increasing military tension and armed conflict, and with the realization that a region's prosperity and stability can contribute to international peace and security, CELAC member States have declared Latin America and the Caribbean a zone of peace. As President Pro Tempore of CELAC, Costa Rica reiterates its commitment to preventive diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes, with the aim of forever eradicating both the use and the threat of force from our region.

Costa Rica trusts that the United Nations will maintain international peace and security in order to promote sustainable development and ensure genuine respect for all human rights. At a time when we must control the reflexive use of coercive measures as a first course of action, when anxiety and despair are unsettling many, it is essential to re-establish hope. When faced with fear, we must have confidence. When faced with conflict, we must turn to peace. When faced with rejection and prejudice on the part of others, we must offer a caring and fraternal embrace. When faced with death, we must think of life.

With faith in dialogue and consultation, I have come to the General Assembly to ask that we declare

peace — that we conscientiously and decisively work together towards a culture and education for peace; towards strengthening of the social State based on the rule of law, as well as its institutions and our economies; towards conflict prevention and resolution of international controversies by peaceful means; towards a renewed role for the Security Council; towards an end to and a reversal of climate change; and towards sustainable development from which not one person in the world is excluded.

I have come to tell the Assembly that silence is not an option for us. We must raise our voices when confronted with actions and situations that go against the universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. I have come to inspire us to work together on new paradigms for sustainable development, human security and peace for the whole world.

The Costa Rican poet Julieta Dobles Yzaguirre wondered: "Will the Earth in the new millennium/ become that common home?" I would like to respond to the poet with her own words: "No one is saved alone./ Perhaps in sharing words and actions/ peace will finally break out."

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Mongolia.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Tsakhia: At the outset, Sir, may I join others in extending our heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Sam Kutesa on his unanimous election as President General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. Mr. Kutesa can count on my delegation's full support in the discharge of his enormous responsibilities in steering our work in the months ahead.

The world is faced with multiple crises — violent conflicts in various parts of the world, terrorist activities by extremist groups, unprecedented epidemics and natural calamities. At this time of turmoil, we, as a family of nations, must rally around this world Organization as a centre of multilateralism, upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the universal principles of international law.

We need peace and development. We need to do our utmost to implement the right of peoples to peace as emphasized by the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, adopted 30 years ago at the initiative of Mongolia. We have consistently supported the joint efforts of the international community against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Mongolia is a party to the majority of international counter-terrorism instruments. The seemingly unthinkable atrocities committed by the terrorist group called the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant pose alarming threats to regional peace and security. The international community must take resolute action to defeat these threats comprehensively and in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mongolia commends the Secretary-General's leadership in rallying international support and establishing the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response to ensure a rapid, effective and coherent response to the Ebola crisis. We support the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions to that effect.

The situation in Ukraine should be resolved only through political dialogue, without the use of force. The current ceasefire needs to be made more sustainable; all efforts towards finding a solution, including the Putin plan outlined in Ulaanbaatar earlier this month, as well as the Minsk protocol of 5 September and its follow-up memorandum, should be taken into account.

Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov (Tajikistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Just 25 years ago, Mongolia chose its development path, deciding to embrace the rule of law, democratic governance, a market economy and an open society. Although we are among the countries known as the third wave of democratization, the transition to democracy was in many respects unique in Mongolia.

We made a simultaneous transition to democracy and a market economy. We made that transition peacefully. In 1990, democratic parliamentary elections were not only the first of their kind in the region, but they were fully free and fair. To ensure inclusive growth and citizens' participation, a national policy on decentralization through direct democracy was introduced. As a result, citizens are now able to directly participate in identifying development priorities and allocations and monitoring local budgets.

To identify a long-term development pathway and regain the confidence of investors, a number of multi-stakeholder events have been held in Mongolia — the Economic Forum, the Business Summit and Discover Mongolia. In addition, new laws, particularly on investment, investment funding and petroleum, and budget transparency, have been adopted.

At the international level, Mongolia served as the Chair of the Fifth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies. We currently chair the Freedom Online Coalition. It is the first time that an Asian country leads the Coalition. We support the Human Rights Council's decision that Internet freedom is a basic human right. As a staunch advocate of democracy and freedom, Mongolia will use its opportunity as chair of the Coalition to promote, both nationally and internationally, an Internet that is free and secure for all.

To support emerging democracies, Mongolia has set up an international cooperation fund. We have nothing to preach, but we have experience and lessons learned. We therefore shared with Kyrgyzstan our experience in parliamentary democracy and legal reform, and we held training sessions for Afghan diplomats and Myanmar journalists.

Mongolia highly commends the Secretary-General's leadership in galvanizing and catalysing global action on climate change. Climate change is not a challenge for the future; it is a matter of urgent Permanent Representativeiority today. Yesterday's United Nations Climate Change Summit 2014 offered world leaders a unique opportunity to voice their commitments to cut the emission gap and to pledge their commitment to the two-degree scenario in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate, to be held in Paris next year.

But that pledge will remain a mere ambition if it is not backed up by bold action and strong political will. We are running out of time, but we cannot run out of planet Earth. The time to act is now. Moreover, the Green Climate Fund needs to be made fully operational. If resources are actually transferred as an incentive to countries that reduce their emission of greenhouse gases, that will have a multiplier effect. No one country is immune to climate change. Even my own country, Mongolia, which has a centuries-old tradition of living in harmony with nature, is experiencing its disproportionate effect. Conscious of that reality, Mongolia has recently adopted a green development policy. We expressed our support for the statement on carbon pricing, and for the New York Declaration on Forests to combat deforestation.

This session of the General Assembly has the important task of articulating the post-2015 development agenda based on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In that regard, we look forward to a synthesis report by the Secretary-General Permanent Representativeior to the intergovernmental negotiations for the sustainable development goals (SDGs) during this General Assembly session. We also welcome the outcome of the Open Working Group on SDGs and commend its hard work over the past 18 months. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development underscored the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries, including landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). However, we believe that the outcome document of the Open Working Group could have better reflected the special needs of landlocked developing countries. We hope that the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations will redress that situation.

In the run-up to the 10-year review of the Almaty Programme of Action, in June 2014 we hosted a high- level international workshop, "The World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation: Implications for LLDCs." We also joined the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports in order to become involved in regional connectivity. Facilitation of transit transportation, infrastructure development and reduction of trade barriers were among the issues discussed during the recent visits to Mongolia by President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir Putin. We agreed to expand our cooperation in those areas. Those agreements were reiterated at the first ever trilateral summit that brought together Mongolia, China and Russia on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation

Summit in Dushanbe earlier this month. The expansion of our cooperation with those two neighbours augurs well for regional trade and investment and paves the way for enhanced economic collaboration with our other neighbours.

Mongolia is redoubling its efforts to join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, to become a dialogue partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and to constructively engage in the East Asia Summit. Last July we also signed an economic partnership agreement with Japan. Strengthening peace and stability in North-East Asia is one of our national security Permanent Representativeiorities. We firmly believe that dialogue and open discussions enhance confidence among nations. Following up on the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security, we have successfully hosted a series of fruitful platforms, including a meeting of women parliamentarians, an international research conference and a meeting of mayors from cities in North-East Asian countries.

Stability on the Korean peninsula is crucial for maintaining regional peace and security. We support an early resumption of the Six-Party talks. As a country with a declared nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia firmly believes that the Korean Peninsula must be nuclear-weapon-free.

In a time of major geopolitical change, the United Nations system must reflect new economic and political realities. We need to accelerate the reform process, including the long-overdue expansion of Security Council membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories. The issue of the Council's working method is also important for all small States, which make up a majority in the United Nations.

Out of 193 States Members, 105 belong to the Forum of Small States. Of the 70 States that have never been elected as members of the Security Council, 50 are small States, including my own country, Mongolia. As a responsible member of the international community, Mongolia has put forward its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council in the elections to be held in 2022, and is seeking the valuable support of its fellow members.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that this session of the General Assembly will be able to deliver a common development strategy beyond 2015, a strategy that will inspire and guide us to work collectively towards a safer, more equitable and prosperous future in the years to come.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Mongolia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elbegdorj Tsakhia, President of Mongolia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Jonathan: Let me begin, Sir, by expressing the best wishes of the Government and the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Mr. Kutesa's assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session. His election is a fitting tribute to his invaluable and inspiring contribution to international diplomacy. I would also like to express my warm appreciation to his predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe, for the astute and steadfast manner in which he steered the affairs of the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly. I thank Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon not only for his relentless commitment to the work of the United Nations, but especially for his tireless efforts to address the challenges of world peace and security.

We are meeting at a time when the world looks with expectation towards 2015, which marks the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the launch of their successors, the sustainable development goals (SDGs). We must ensure, at all levels, that the SDGs reflect the goals and aspirations of all the regions of the world. Indeed, if the SDGs are to drive development and also meet the aspirations of developing countries for poverty elimination and sustainable growth, collective ownership of the emerging process must be our priority. We in Africa expect that the new SDGs will be people-centred. They must promote peace and security, structural economic transformation, inclusive growth, food security for all, environmental sustainability and the shared benefits of science and technology. Indeed,

the gains of the MDGs must be incorporated into the emerging mechanism.

We applaud the wide-ranging recommendations of the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing on domestic resource mobilization, international development assistance, private sector finance and a supportive global enabling environment. My country is honoured to have been accorded the privilege, jointly with Finland, of leading that work as co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, as mandated by the Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio. Along with the work of the Open Working Group on sustainable development goals, the report provides a solid basis for intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. Nigeria is aware of the need to create an enabling environment for rapid development. We are committed to strengthening institutions and improving governance systems, in order to ensure an efficient use of resources and the process itself.

The President returned to the Chair.

The year 2015 also marks the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. Even though the Charter of the United Nations underlines the imperative to spare succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the world continues to witness the ravages of war and human suffering. Today's terrorism, manifested sometimes in insurgency, is vicious and aimless. Its consequences are agonizing, marked by a tendency to annihilate victims and completely destroy infrastructure and properties. The involvement of foreign fighters remains a common feature of terrorist groups, whether Al-Qaida in the Maghreb, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria or the newly emerging Islamic State (IS). The new dimension introduced by IS — namely, the goal of conquering territory and establishing its destructive ideology — is a major challenge that must be collectively halted before it becomes the norm. That challenge focuses renewed attention on the need to review the existing tools for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The violent and criminal activities of Boko Haram have continued to pose a potent challenge to the Government and people of Nigeria. Through a wave of terror, assassinations, bombings and now abductions and kidnappings, predominantly in the north-east of the country, Boko Haram is attempting to truncate development in those areas through murder and mayhem. In April, our innocent daughters were abducted from a secondary school in Chibok, in the north-east. That callous and criminal act has attracted empathy for Nigeria across the globe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the countries and organizations that have expressed solidarity with us and have continued to support our determined efforts to free our daughters. Although it has been over three months since they were abducted, we have never relented in our efforts to see them safely free. Together with our partners, we are working assiduously to free our daughters and reunite them with their families. To that end, I wish to thank the Government of France for organizing and hosting the special summit on security in Nigeria that was held in Paris in May. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Guinea for their committed efforts in support of the fight against Boko Haram. The outcome of the French process and the follow-up in London, Washington, D.C., and Abuja have helped to galvanize regional action and are already yielding positive results. Let me underline today that we shall not waver until we end this mindless war on the innocent and bring all the perpetrators to justice. We will triumph over terrorism.

The failure of the Security Council to agree on unanimous action over pressing challenges to global peace and security in Syria and Iraq and the conflict in Ukraine, as well as with regard to the renewed aggression between Israel and Palestine, has strengthened the case for Security Council reform. Today's challenges can be resolved only by a Security Council whose working methods engender transparency, inclusivity and common ownership through equitable representation of all regions in the decision-making process. It is imperative that we take advantage of 2015, which also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the 1965 reform, to make concrete progress on reforming the Security Council. We believe that there needs to be a fast-track process in line with the initiative of Mr. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, for establishing a working group on reform. Indeed, the Security Council requires the collective resolve of all Member States to ensure that 2015 brings decisive progress.

Even as Africa, and in particular West Africa, battles conflicts and terrorism, with progressive

results, the region is being devastated by the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus. While Nigeria was able to respond effectively to control the spread of the disease, the situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone requires sustainable collective global action if it is to be contained. Through the concerted efforts of our health-care professionals, the World Health Organization and our international partners, we have been able to contain the virus, and we can confidently say that Nigeria today is Ebola-free.

However, we have continued to support efforts to contain the spread of the disease in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. In addition to a direct donation totalling $3.5 million, we have provided training and capacity-building support to the three countries. It is pertinent to stress the need for the international community to properly appreciate the magnitude of the Ebola challenge. Indulging in isolationist and discriminatory tendencies, as some countries are doing, will only worsen an already critical situation. To prevent the disease from becoming a global catastrophe, the United Nations must accord it the maximum priority it deserves.

Certainly, there has been much discussion on limiting ozone layer depletion since the commencement of negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994. However, the extent of progress in key areas, particularly in limiting the contribution of man-made activities to greenhouse gas emission, has yet to be determined.

Nigeria appreciates the indispensable role of the United Nations in its search for solutions to all those challenges: terrorism, global peace and security, the environment, and forging sustainable economic development. We have been and will remain a reliable and active partner, especially as we collectively work to resolve the new and emerging threats to global peace and security. The world must come together and win the war against terror.

On 29 May 1999, Nigeria ended its military rule after the inauguration of a democratically elected President. Come February 2015, the country will conduct its fifth post-military-rule general election. In keeping with my election as President by the people of Nigeria, we shall conduct elections based on global best practices to further strengthen our democratic institutions.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Rwanda.

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kagame: I want to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly.

We are living through a period of unprecedented progress in human development. The success of the Millennium Development Goals framework demonstrates that international cooperation remains strong, though we wish the expected results would come faster. Even on climate change, if the public and private sectors work together to increase investment in scientific research, we can look forward to a future where countries no longer have to choose between green energy and economic growth.

While we work on building peace and well-being in Africa, crises elsewhere in the world have aroused grave concern. Efforts to address them seem to have little effect, and in some cases they may even make things worse.

Two critically important public goods have been consistently undervalued by the international system in its approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. They are physical security and national identity. When security breaks down, the human costs are enormous. Extremists and opportunists are empowered. Citizens lose faith in public institutions, as grievances are settled in the street. As a result, sustainable gains in good governance cannot be made. It takes time and patience to build a better political system. There are no shortcuts. We are dealing with real people who want change, but with continuity and safety. They must be fully included in the process of consensus-building.

That is because structures of governance that are not developed from within will not take root. We should encourage full ownership and partnership, and the approach of international institutions and Member States should take those realities into account. In countries that have known only peace, such arguments may sound self-serving. But they are not, because lives are at stake.

The second neglected element is national identity. That is just as important. To manage the diversity in our societies, politics must be national in scope. Whatever differences we may have, our common citizenship is a bond that unites us. The negative experiences of nationalism have created doubt about affirming patriotism and national identity. However, what we see around the world today is that national identities are too weak, not that they are too strong. As a result, ethnicity, region and religion become the dominant currency of politics, and nations are torn apart. International systems should encourage efforts by Governments and civil society to strengthen national unity.

In Rwanda, we have focused on building accountable governance institutions and renewing our dignity as a nation. As a result, Rwandans today are among the most optimistic and civic-minded people in the world. For us, stability is not an abstraction, it is a reality that abides in the minds and hearts of the people and the institutions they build to sustain it. Once achieved, the horizon expands from poverty reduction to wealth creation and the attainment of ever higher measures of human development.

Therefore, our task in the international community is not to manage conflicts, but to help prevent and end those conflicts. If we focus on keeping people safe and bringing them together to solve their problems, we will be able to do so.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Rwanda for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Hernández Alvarado (*spoke in Spanish*): I am Juan Orlando Hernández. I was born in a humble village called Rio Grande, in the department of Lempira, a region with very high rates of inequality and poverty, although that is now changing, as is my whole country. I am here in my capacity as President of Honduras, a country located in the heart of the Americas. It is a country small in size, but with a great desire to achieve development based on its own identity, and with a people who struggle daily to advance and progress, and who aspire to better living conditions.

In 2009, our country suffered one of the worst political crises in its history. It led to several hundred million dollars in losses, and most unfortunately, to thousands of divided families and more poverty. That crisis caused more damage than any hurricane or natural disaster. However, today we can say that we have overcome the political crisis.

Honduras is a country where full democracy is practised and there is complete freedom to choose its leaders. In addition to representative democracy, we practice participatory democracy. Proof of that is the dialogue that will lead to a compact for Honduras that will be the result of listening to the views of different sectors of society on central issues for our people. Our Everyone for a Better Life Plan includes four basic pillars: restoring peace, generating investment and large-scale employment opportunities, supporting families living in extreme poverty, and combatting corruption and promoting greater transparency in the culture of the Honduran people.

Since taking office eight months ago, I have been completely devoted to recovering and maintaining peace and tranquillity, creating opportunities with fairer conditions for everybody. We need more investment to come to our country in order to create jobs that will translate into greater income for our families. To that end, Honduras has amended its Constitution to create one of the best platforms in the world for investment and employment. It is a very innovative. I am referring to

the Zone for Employment and Economic Development, which is better known by its acronym ZEDE.

The Honduras ZEDE model is not just another free trade zone, similar to the 3,500 that already exist in the world. Ours is different because it is comprehensive. It is a jurisdiction with four dimensions: legal, economic, administrative and political. The Honduran ZEDE is a L.E.A.P. zone, which in English means "to jump forward". In Honduras, the ZEDE will help us take a competitive leap forward towards greater well-being. Rather than joining the race to the bottom, Honduras has decided to compete upwards, welcoming global investment through a special jurisdiction of the highest level to employ the most productive and profitable workforce in a highly favourable location at the centre of the Americas, bringing the Pacific and the Atlantic together.

In the legal dimension, ZEDE offers a common law system, with compulsory arbitration and international judges. Economically speaking, we are competitive in an open market, with a series of agile simple regulations, with highly attractive and sustainable incentives for the creation of good jobs under decent conditions. In the administrative dimension, ZEDE provides a technical, non-political structure without bureaucratic obstacles that is effective for companies that must operate at the speed of the markets and technology in the twenty-first century, and with full guarantees of transparency and security within the rule of law. Finally, to attract long-term investment and ensure good jobs, we guarantee political stability and transparency based on international treaties and agreements, with the support of an international commission of 21 trustees to ensure compliance with best practices for workers and the investors. I invite everyone to discover the great opportunity Honduras offers the world.

We have also created a participatory model of Government enterprises and the private sector, with mixed capital — in other words public-private partnerships. We are building an interoceanic logistical corridor linking the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, allowing us to move cargo between both Oceans in less than six hours — I repeat, less than six hours. Our hope is to capture at least 5 per cent of the demand to move goods from one ocean to another.

We have made progress, but we also recognize that much remains to be done. For example, there has been a rise in the number of Hondurans going abroad, including an unusual migration of children and vulnerable youth to North America, many unaccompanied by an adult. This migration is the result of the violence created by the movement of drugs through our territory, poverty and the lack of opportunities. Special attention must be dedicated to this phenomenon, especially in countries that are responsible for the problem either because they produce the drugs or because they are the market where the drug is consumed. We believe that this is a shared responsibility. Faced with the scant interest in solving the problem shown but those who created it, we Hondurans must stress this issue in every forum that we possibly can, because we must speak clearly and forcefully about that issue.

Honduran territory is today one of the main battlefields of a war that is not our own. We did not start this war. Its strategies are decided outside Honduras, and it involves drug-consuming countries in the North and drug producing countries in the South. It is a real monster — a multinational, criminal octopus without nationalities, borders or scruples, which is dedicated to the trafficking, trade and consumption of drugs and to encouraging demand, especially in the wealthiest societies.

The drugs transiting through Honduras and Central America destroy the lives and peace of our people, our youth, our children and our women. From those who orchestrate and organize the transnational activity within our territory to ordinary citizens and the children involved as pawns in drug dealing and addicts, all are affected. They are all embarking on the path of no return, which will tear apart our society, destroy families, corrupt officials and destroy institutions. I invite members to ask themselves: Who are the real culprits in this cycle of death, misfortune, mourning, struggle, blood and pain? It is not Hondurans, I can assure the Assembly of that.

In forums such as this, we need to agree on the basic contours of the issue and the facts. We cannot, in the midst of crisis and without coming to useful or concrete conclusions, put forward proposals based on legalizing production and consumption, on the one hand, and on waging a merciless war on trafficking and illegal drug use, on all fronts and regardless of cost, on the other. I ask myself, and I invite members to ask themselves: Who are the true victims of this tragedy? All those who cannot live in peace in modern society are victims, as are those who cannot live in society without using drugs. Society itself is a victim, as it is unable to organize its efforts and manage its resources in a rational manner so as to create new opportunities.

Honduras produces and consumes practically no drugs. We are a transit country. Unfortunately, we provide only the battlefield and the dead. We provide the resources to combat drugs' transit through our territory, and those are resources that we are prevented from investing in meeting our development problems and challenges. I repeat: we are not responsible for the war.

I think it is time to do what we have to do: respect human rights; follow what experts and our common sense are telling us; attack the problem at its root, once and for all; and do it together and throughout the affected region. We must create a multinational force capable of dealing successfully with a phenomenon that is transnational in terms of its organization, its market, its projections and its financing. This morning, President Obama called for such unity in fighting radical fundamentalists. I would ask: What is the difference between the effects of terrorist acts perpetrated by radical fundamentalists and the effects of the terrorist acts perpetrated by those who traffic in drugs? What is the difference?

Today the international community is discussing what happens in other regions of the world when children, young people and families are displaced by war, violence and radical extremists. Those are all situations that we as a nation also condemn. Of course we do. However, little is being said and about the thousands of families living in the northern triangle of Central America. I do not want to believe that this issue will simply be forgotten. As human beings, we cannot allow that to happen. I would once again ask the Assembly: What is the difference between those displaced by violence in other regions and those displaced by the violence committed by drug traffickers and transnational criminals? What is the difference?

One difference is that those displaced — those thousands of families and individual children — come knocking on the doors of the United States of America. As a region, we cannot continue to ignore this human drama, which affects thousands of Central Americans, especially unaccompanied migrant minors who, on their way to the United States, have been the victims of violence, transnational crime, rape, human trafficking and the organ trade. Many have died or disappeared in the desert. We cannot forget that. Those children deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They are innocent victims. We are talking about innocent children just like our children and grandchildren. They are vulnerable human beings.

I would like to inform the Assembly that yesterday, the Secretary-General kindly agreed to have me, along with the ministers of Guatemala and El Salvador, present to him the Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle, which maps out an initiative to support and create opportunities so that our countrymen are able to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity with everyone in our region — and I repeat, everyone, because this cause is our common responsibility.

An important part of the solution to the child migration problem is to create job opportunities for their parents there, in Central America, and to improve security for young people there, in Central America. Both issues are closely linked to the trade policies of the United States. We are not asking for financial assistance or charity. What we are asking for is just and equitable trade treatment, as is already given to other countries in the world. What we want is to jobs, to create those opportunities. Honduras supports efforts to unite the world in peace and prosperity through just trade and better access to major world markets. Within that vision, and in the context of the current negotiations, we demand that Honduras and Central America receive the same commercial treatment as Asian countries do, in order to enable us to compete.

To be frank, the United States giving preferential tariffs and rules of origin to other countries and leaving Honduras and Central America out of that would lead to thousands of jobs being lost in our region and would lead more children to illegally cross the border. I say to President Obama, Congress, the North American people and the people of the world: Honduras is committed to solving the child migration issue and to fighting drug trafficking. Many of them know this, clearly, given our determination. But if there is not a reasonable degree of coherence in our countries' trade policies, as partners, what is the real message to our people in Central America? What should Honduran children and their parents expect, in Central America?

Given the many problems we face as Hondurans, we have learned to see every crisis as an opportunity, and my Government follows the Christian principles of solidarity and the common good. We are promoting a very ambitious programme called A Better Life, through which we are making small changes and solving big problems. I am pleased to note that, now, some of those with the biggest fortunes are also promoting solidarity. I invite us all to ask: How much money is enough for a human being to feel fulfilled?

(*spoke in English*)

How much money is good enough?

(*spoke in Spanish*)

A few days ago we read about the humanitarian action being undertaken by one of the world's richest men, Mr. Bill Gates, who, through his foundation, is seeking A Better Life in terms of health for thousands of poor families by promoting scientific research into new designs for basic sanitation systems. I think Mr. Bill Gates found the answer to the question.

(*spoke in English*)

How much money is good enough?

(*spoke in Spanish*)

As we are working on the same issue, I take this opportunity, with the Assembly's permission, to invite Mr. Bill Gates, a citizen of the world, to my country to work on this common endeavour.

It is very encouraging that some of the wealthiest people in the world are not seeking the secret of eternal youth, or trying to send expeditions to other planets while our brothers are dying on this one. On the contrary, they are aware of the problems of their poorer brethren. This is going on in many countries, including Honduras, where many good businesspeople have signed on to work with our A Better Life programme and are demonstrating social responsibility by creating jobs. And that is what this is all about — solidarity and social responsibility, but not romantic social responsibility. In that regard, I would like to quote Pope Francis, a citizen of the world, whose words I hope will ring in our ears.

> "I have never seen a moving van following a funeral procession, but there is a treasure we can take with us, a treasure that no one can take away — not those things we have kept for ourselves, but what we have given to others".

We should think about that and consider those words. Honduras is a country where 43 per cent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, which is not enough to pay for a person's basic nutritional needs. That is why we are making a major effort to respond to these people's needs through the Better Life programme, thus enabling them to live with dignity. The Better Life programme is designed to respond to the needs of 835,000 families, who are getting help in improving their homes, including providing access to drinking water and basic sanitation, decent roofs overhead and floors underfoot, family gardens and monetary support to ensure that children attend school, have improved health care and change their living conditions so as to achieve a better life.

Our housing improvements include the use of clean stoves, reducing wood consumption and smoke, which is harmful to women and children's health and which, according to the World Health Organization, kills 500,000 women around the world every year. In Central America alone, about 35,000 people die from the wood smoke emitted from dirty cooking stoves every year. With every eco or clean stove installed, we make a contribution to the rest of humankind by saving 15 medium-sized trees every year, thus helping to protect the environment. In that regard, I would like to highlight the work of former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for her Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves initiative, whose goal is to put clean stoves in 100 million households by 2020. On this subject we share Mrs. Clinton's vision and are working hard to achieve it.

When presidents come to the General Assembly of the United Nations, they often prepare speeches they deem most appropriate and specific to the lofty heights of this great forum, but beyond the words themselves, the message I want to convey is that the most important thing is for all of us to be accepted as citizens of the world, with the same duty to fight and defend our territory, our families and our planet, with the same right to aspire to a better life, and that what is vital is the support of those who have the most to those who have the least. If my message today can reach and move a few to act, I think it will have been worth coming. I would like to remind the Assembly that if we are part of the largest forum in the world, it is because we consider ourselves to be citizens of the world, human beings with the same dignity, and therefore all of us, everyone of us, equal. Honduras is making progress; Honduras is changing; Honduras sends its greetings to all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Honduras for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Juan Orlando Hernández Alvarado, President of the Republic of Honduras, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Montenegro.

Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vujanović: I would first like to express my great appreciation for the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to promote and achieve peace, security and prosperity in the world. I would also like to duly acknowledge the work of Mr. John William Ashe, President of the General Assembly at its previous session, to offer my best wishes to President Kutesa for his stewardship of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, and to confirm Montenegro's willingness to cooperate fully with him in his accomplishment of his important duties. I emphasize the relevance of the theme of the current session, since it is highly pertinent to our efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals with the imminent arrival of 2015.

As ever, Montenegro remains committed to an effective multilateral system, resting on a strong United Nations. As a responsible Member of the United Nations, Montenegro is therefore committed to continuing to contribute to strengthening the Organization and building a functional, integrated system that promotes respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, while devising and implementing global responses to global challenges. In that regard, we will continue to support the process of general reform and of system-wide coherence, as well as the integrated Delivering as One programme of action, based on successful implementation at the national level. I am proud to point out here that in March, in the most beautiful part of Montenegro's capital city, Podgorica, we opened the United Nations Eco building, host to all the specialized United Nations agencies, and offering the best possible conditions for their work and their implementation of the Delivering as One concept. I see this project as a strong tool of reliable partnership for Montenegro in achieving fundamental United Nations goals.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Montenegro will continue to fully support the integration of human rights dimensions into all aspects of the work of the United Nations and to further strengthen the role of the Council in response to violations of human rights, while preserving the universality of international human rights law and the independence of the United Nations human rights system. In our approach, the key priority is to promote the rights of vulnerable groups — children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons — and to promote gender equality and the fight against discrimination.

Peace and stability, as preconditions for prosperous development, can be ensured through positive activism in global international organizations, primarily in the United Nations, and the constructive approach of every country in the sphere of regional policy, as well as a commitment to good-neighbourly cooperation. Therefore, Montenegro strongly promotes this approach in bilateral relations and regional initiatives in South-East Europe. We are certain that the success of Montenegro in the process of integration into the European Union and NATO represents a major contribution to the stability and opening up of prospects for development of the wider Balkans region.

Montenegro strongly supports global efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. This year, we ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, becoming the forty-fourth country to do so. Our ratification represents our contribution towards the entry into force of that historic Treaty, as well as an illustration of our firm commitment to a responsible global arms trade.

Open and frozen conflicts, from Ukraine across the Middle East to Africa, pose a threat to durable global stability. Of particular concern is the fact that the escalation of violence typically causes humanitarian disasters and massive human rights violations. We fully advocate an urgent end to violence and a political dialogue that would lead to solutions in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions. In that context, we believe that the United Nations and international community's activities should place stronger emphasis on better utilizing preventive measures under Chapter VI of the Charter, with a special focus on mediation as a highly cost-effective tool for conflict prevention and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

I would like to reaffirm Montenegro's strong commitment to the responsibility to protect as a matter of national priority. Montenegro welcomes the French initiative to seek a code of conduct on the use of the veto in situations of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and remains keen on putting that proposal into operation.

The rule of law and the protection of civilians in peacekeeping missions are of particular importance, and we stand for the consistent implementation of the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions, to which we are ready to contribute. Unfortunately, terrorism still poses an enormous threat to international peace and security, as evidenced by current events in the Middle East. I consider it necessary to step up efforts at all levels in preventing terrorism, in accordance with international instruments and the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Montenegro strongly promotes a sustainable development policy and, in line with our active participation in the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, we are committed to further contribute towards the elaboration of a transformative and ambitious post-2015 development framework. I think that the post-2015 development agenda must be based on an approach of respect for and the promotion of human rights, where human development will truly ensure that no one is neglected. Poverty eradication and sustainable prosperity for the benefit of all people and the planet must be the overarching objective and guide the design of a transformative development agenda.

We strongly support the important United Nations mission implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) relating to human development, which essentially affirms fundamental human values. We are proud that two weeks ago, UNDP chose Montenegro to host the presentation of this year's *Human Development Report* for the South-East Europe and Central Asia regions. We see this as a recognition of Montenegro's progress, affirmation of human development, and proof of a reliable partnership between Montenegro and the United Nations.

Finally, I wish to emphasize the fact that the United Nations has a responsible partner in Montenegro, which will continue to promote and pursue the goals and values fostered by the Charter.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Montenegro for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of Montenegro, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.